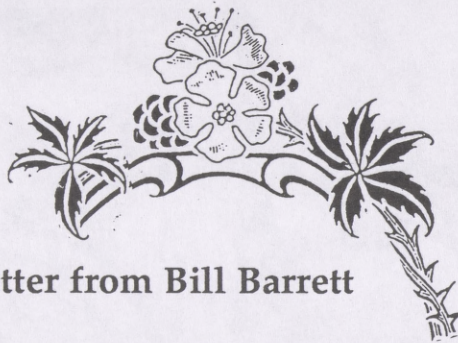




S.F.A. (eye)

SFA Eye, Spring, 1990

Letter from Bill Barrett



I was asked to write a few words for the SFA Eye about student government and student activities, and why they are important to students and the school. When I sat down to contemplate the issue, my thoughts immediately went back to my own experiences in art school in the mid-sixties. I was a member of the Student Judiciary Board my junior year, a dorm monitor and co-Editor of the student paper my senior year.

One strong memory is of how interesting, even heady, it was to be involved in key issues on campus at a time when student activism was coming to the fore. We met with key administrators to discuss our concerns about various school issues, and I like to think we had something to do with bringing about some changes in the school. Ultimately, a petition we started led to the dismissal of the Dean of Students. (Ten years later, a classmate commented on how thoroughly ironic it was that I had just been appointed Dean of Students at another art school. I am also reminded that, at about the same time, a student protest led to the resignation of the President of SFAI. I am not, however, suggesting that it's time to repeat that move at SFAI.)

An equally strong memory is of how intriguing and informative it was to learn about art schools, education, and administration. I was fascinated with legal concerns and with what made art schools (or other organizations, for that matter) run well and progress. Obviously, it was a deep impression, for I am now completing my twentieth year working at art schools. But, while those early involvements were fascinating, I am not writing to say that students should enter the field of educational administration - in fact, I wouldn't suggest it for most people. Rather, what was most important for me was the extra education and miniature "civics lesson" I got from it all.

These are interesting times for art in this country and interesting times for SFAI as an institution (at least I hope everyone finds them as interesting as I do). Among other things, we are facing critical issues of funding and facilities which will challenge us for some time to come. Fortunately, we have a great group of students, many of whom are involved in the Student Senate and other student organizations.

I just want to say how important student opinions and involvement are to the whole institution, and how educational it can be for you, as well. I encourage your participation in student government and your use of the Senate to make your views known to the rest of us. We'd like to hear from you - and if at times it appears that we are too busy to think about something that may be on your mind, then by all means take the initiative and bring the issue to us. As we're fond of saying: if we don't know something, we can't do anything about it.

And, who knows, maybe you'll get hooked like a few of us did twenty years ago, and end up trying to practice the strange art of college administration. It involves the seemingly contradictory tasks of keeping a place free, inventive, and always changing on the one hand, and just sane enough to stay afloat on the other. My education is still continuing.

Bill Barrett

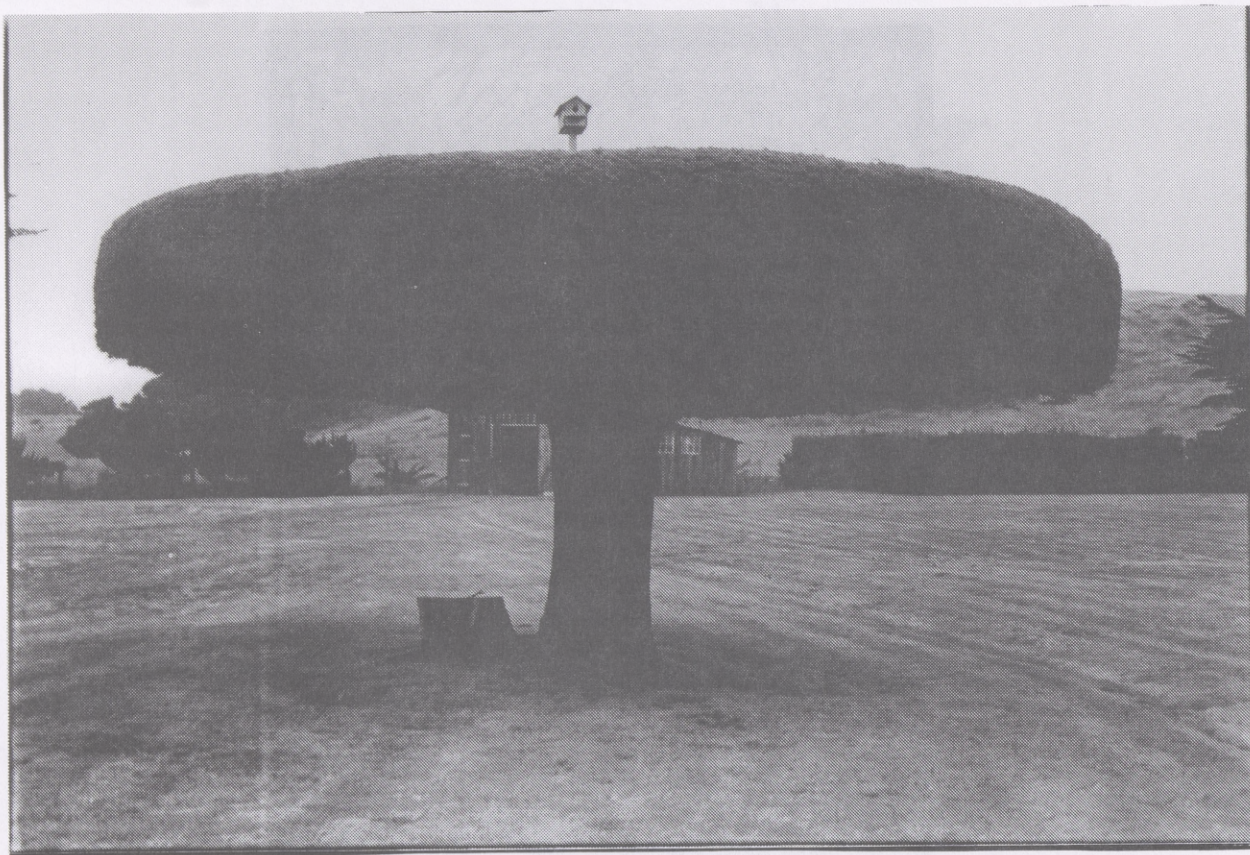




Rene Rodriguez



Bridgette Pruden



Margaret Derring

DISHING WITH CLIFF: ON CLUBBING

Well, here I am on a cold Saturday night, trying to bust my butt over getting this column in. I'd better think of something quick, as the editor's already extended the deadline over a week. If I don't come up with something fast...

Actually, this piece should write itself, since I am an expert on the subject of clubbing, or certainly was a couple of years ago. I was a genuine celebutante, and with my best friend Darrel at my side would conquer all the underground spots. We worked together at few, but mostly we just went for the hell of it. I should be

clubbing right now, come to think of it, instead of writing on deadline.

Darrel and I would call each other after work to plan how we'd top our appearance of the previous week with something even more spectacular. One time I vogued in a suit covered head to toe in *National Enquirer* clippings, while Darrel chose a more subdued silver lame mini dress with side cutouts. Generally, we'd stop first for double espressoes, to build up energy as well as occasion gasps of astonishment from the coffee shop's suburban patrons. Then, some fries at Canters. And then, the Scene.

But in the last couple of years I really haven't gotten into the club scene as intensely. The realities of life - school and money - have slapped me in the face. We don't spend \$15 to get into a club if that's what we eat on for the rest of the week. I rationalize, and remind myself that the SF club scene is not what it was in LA.

People don't dress for clubs here as they do down south. No-nonsense San Francisco clubbers just want to freak all over the floor. They're friendlier here, actually, and better dancers, which I suppose is easier when you're not covered

continued

Clubbing continued

with yesterday's newspapers.

But the clubs remain a challenge, and my advice is that hands down, the best place to go off on the dance floor is The Box. Thursday and Saturdays the Kennel Club on Divisadero is transformed into a scandalous frenzy of arms, butts, boobs, legs. DJ Page Hodel sometimes gets lost in radio funk but for the most part the turntables work on hip house, deep house, and rare grooves. And the energy level is incredible. Homosexuals have been known to frequent the place (they say you needn't be one, but honey, it wouldn't hurt) and if you're a straight from Concord or Richmond, stay home. If you show, dress raggedy, mainly because if what you're wearing falls on the floor you'll have to burn it.

You dance at Kennel Klub, and dance only. So guys, if your technique stops at the Surfer Stomp, flailing arms and whoops of approval, kindly attempt to hear the beat. Boom-boom-boom, not Boom-bam-crash-shriek. Where'd you learn to dance, Bandstand? Practice something in the mirror besides seizures.

This is my last Dishing with Cliff column: It was grand, school was great, and I will miss you all. Now get over it! ■

Art Project Alaska

An On-Site Report

Directly after the oil spill that severely affected the pristine waters of Prince William Sound, Alaska, ten students from SFAI (Lauri Scarpelli, Jim Kimberly, Kit Skromme, Phillip Ross, Detlef Heinrichs, Rob Ingeberg, Julie Derry, Jason Leggiere, Amy Peterson, and Tim Thyzel) came together to try to make the public more aware of the issues and to offer ways in which one might get involved to combat environmental problems.

The group had to organize and mobilize - raise funds, select artists, arrange accommodations and coordinate a flight to Alaska to document the damage) in a short time period. Once there, they combed the town and areas surrounding Valdez, photographing, interviewing, attending congressional hearings, visiting locals and talking to school children. The Coast Guard provided helicopters, by means of which the artists could grasp the extent of the area affected.

When they returned the artists worked throughout the summer and fall to record their responses, hoping to provide a more permanent memory, and a deeper emotional impact, of the event than daily news reports had done. Among the works, which form part of a traveling exhibition, are Lauri Scarpelli's four, 3-foot paintings on metal, the subject of each is the fisherpeople and their lore. Jim Kimberly's 8-by-

10-foot installation combines oil and a broken toilet to suggest the Columbia glacier, and other work creates parallels between beach scenes in Los Angeles and Valdez. Phillip Ross groups eight- and nine-foot tall chairs - one of steel, the second of wood and the last of straw - which refer to life guard towers, oil derricks and electric chairs, while retaining, as their major metaphor, the concept of power: the throne, as it were. Amy Peterson considered the tides which re-oiled the beach with every turn, and the boat she sculpted contains mechanically stimulated surges of water timed to coincide with Valdez's.

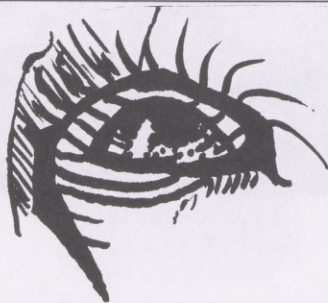
Kit Skromme made lifesize charcoal drawings of the people of Valdez, Jason Leggiere, on a 7- by 9-foot canvas, painted multiple oil tankers. Julie Derry worked with Valdez school children and in her 30-foot mural included their photographs, art and texts. Rob Ingeberg played with the ideas of tourism, cars and the environment; Tim Thyzel collaged trash, oil paint and tar; Detlef Heinrichs made a series of 18-by 24-inch color prints of the natives surrounded by oil soaked birds and otters, to which he affixed written comments.

Rob Ingeberg, who was a leader of the Alaska project, died in August of 1989, leaving his work to be auctioned and any profits to the Prince William Sound Conservation Alliance.

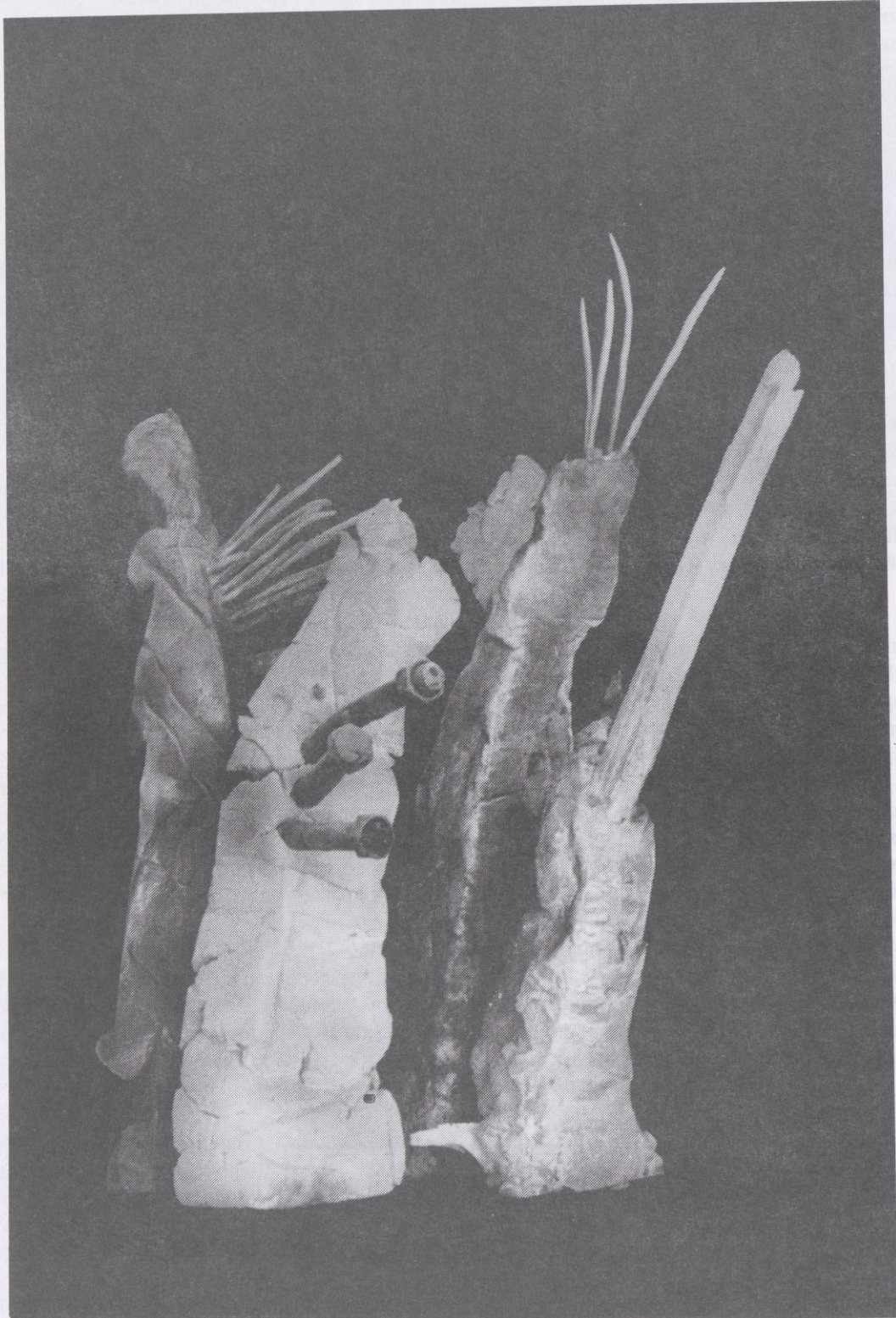
The members of Project Alaska, who can be contacted through the Student Affairs office, plan to schedule four- to six-month periods during which other SFAI students might make installations relevant to the environment in a Fort Cronkhitte building newly dedicated to that purpose. ■

sittin in the bar
head in hand
hair protrudes
between fingers
feelings linger
lookin around
tapping foot to sound
emotions compound
as i hear my
favorite singer

S. BAHNS



S. F. A. (eye)



Rod Morrell

A Letter from Mike Grady

One of the most important functions of the Student Affairs Office is to help students interact. It falls upon the students themselves, though, to take advantage of these opportunities for artistic and social exchange. At SFAI it's easy to become so absorbed in your work, or in the need to work outside of SFAI to support yourself, that you fail to take advantage of the school community. That's a major mistake.

It is naive to believe that art is a solitary endeavor. While the physical act of making art may be, the art world is excruciatingly social. The myriad of social events - parties, openings, performances, etc. are where most of the dialogue about art occurs these days. At SFAI there are parallel student events which serve to help students become more comfortable with social/artistic interaction.

A few years ago an instructor at SFAI required attendance of the MFA students at specified downtown openings. When she discovered one of her students had not attended any of the vents she congratulated him on becoming independently wealthy and hence immune from the economic realities of the art world. Of course the student was far from wealthy, and learned that social interaction was indeed a central requirement of economic success in the art world.

There is another important reason for SFAI social events and organizations: emotional support. For many students, SFAI can be a cold and apparently hostile environment. In a place where artistic production and critical acumen count for a lot it's easy to get lost in the shuffle. The only way to survive emotionally sometimes, is with the help of friends. Since friendships arise from commonality of interest, we encourage student organizations to develop along these lines. Organizations like the Gay and Lesbian Students, Multi-Cultural students, Sober Students and the Student Senate have helped many students survive and prosper at SFAI.

Many SFAI students come here from more traditional college settings where "campus life" is a more or less prescribed series of rituals. While SFAI can't, and probably shouldn't, offer the variety of social activities found in most colleges, at SFAI there's something else: The extra dimension in social terms is the exhibition opening ritual. That's why the Diego Rivera Gallery is so important. The Diego symbolizes SFAI at its best. It represents the open and unencumbered expression of students' ideas and experiences. Socially, the Diego offers the most consistent, and perhaps the most appropriate, venue for students to meet, talk, argue, embrace.... It's the hub of artistic dialogue within SFAI and artistic dialogue is ultimately why we're all here.

It's a well-worn axiom that artists are seldom "joiners." It will never be the case that SFAI is a "club" school or a "party" school. We will *never* see a fraternity or a sorority here. The value of human contact and interaction, though, shouldn't be underrated. If you find yourself feeling isolated, it's up to you to do something about it. Just look around. You'll find others here who are looking for someone, too.

Mike Grady



THE S. F. A. I. FESTIVAL

AN INTERVIEW WITH LARRY JORDAN

SFAI Eye: Tell us about the festival's origins, your involvement with it.

Larry Jordan: Between 1969 and '72 I was teaching at both CCAC - I was the only person teaching film there - and here. I was one of two in the film department here, then. I forget the exact year, but I had a festival at CCAC of all student work. It was more like finals, actually, but they invited everybody they knew and it got exciting. So it seemed only logical to have a two-school festival, and then we thought we'd send out announcements to the other AICA schools to see if they wanted to send in work, and the Art Institute decided to go all out with it.

SFAI Eye: How do you feel about the addition of video to the festival?

LJ: It's very easy to do programs, we have good monitors, the auditorium is not too large that we can't do a pretty good video presentation. People have bones to pick with video projection on a big screen, but it's not that bad. I think the video addition is fine.

SFA Eye: What do you think are the weaknesses of the festival?

LJ: Organization and mailing. Mailing lists and mailing time is the first problem, and the second is that every film has to get back to its maker on time. Something always falls through the cracks somewhere, and someone's calling saying 'Where's my film?' It's a procedure problem, which stems from the fact that the people managing the festival turn over. They're students. But that's the strength of it, that it's a student-run festival, and a lot of people around the country respect that, because it's not pretentious and it's avant garde, and youth oriented, young people mainly to run it and show in it.

SFA Eye: So this should continue to be a student-run event?

LJ: Absolutely. I think that's its essential nature. It is the San Francisco Art Institute Film/Video Festival, under the aegis of the school, officially of the school. And since I'm officially of the school, I've been involved in sponsoring it. But eventually the school might consider

making somebody on staff Executive Director, and former students might want to come back and help out. I could see that happening. Somebody's got to give support, and continuity might solve the problems of organization. But the spirit of it must stay that of a student-run festival.

SFA Eye: But you've decided not to be directly involved with this year's festival?

LJ: Well, I haven't been very involved since the event went national except in the last couple of years, when I was faculty sponsor. In the interim the students gravitated to however was department chair. But this year - well, I don't feel at all possessive about it. It very quickly became an almost autonomous student project. And I just felt it was somebody else's turn.

"it's a student run festival, and a lot of people around the country respect it because it's not pretentious and it's avant garde and a showcase for experimental film/video."

SFA Eye: What's your role in the future?

LJ: I'm always part of it to the extent of coming and watching. It's a little hard for me to involve myself in the present structure, because it's rather impersonal. When it was my students we were all in it together, it was a family affair. These days it's like another duty, and I don't have a strong emotional tie to it, so it's a little difficult to relate to it the way I related when I was helping produce those films, and directly involved in every piece that was made. In terms of being on boards, juries, committees, I'm not through, but I've paid a lot of dues in that regard. You need a person who's there, who's available on the spot, and I live pretty far away. I'm not here when a problem comes up on Thursday, I'm only here Mondays and Wednesdays.

SFA Eye: How would you feel if this festival didn't happen next year?

LJ: I'd feel sad, but it's how I'd feel. I'd feel disappointed.

"Don't look around! To find the sound! That's right between your feet" - Traffic

The past lurks in corridors down the hall
And voices lure me towards old forsaken rooms
Where I know not the reason for departing

I have now begun to put things into perspective
I can not hold fast to that which is subjective
...Less imitation be held and felt
For as long as time may pend
Like stones that represent me for who I am
Of myself as well as the grains of Sand
Which simply slide through my fingers

Walls crumble and collapse
But their influences live in the tiles of new spaces
The intangible traces surrounding the void
I am molded by experience
Taking new form and shape

Someday I will leave this place
But not of my own accord
My presence will surpass the physical
Essence of my being
And all may be as one someday
If we could just find common ground

Whitney Fuller
October 1989

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